

July 6th 2018 – A ceremony in honor of Diana ROWDEN, a British secret agent executed at the Natzweiler-Struthof camp.

On the occasion of the 74th anniversary of the death of Diana Rowden, her Britain family and her french family where she hide before she was arrested, wish to give her a tribute at the european center on resistance and deportation, in the place where she died.

Diana ROWDEN, a heroic commitment

Born in Chelsea in 1915, Diana Rowden spent her childhood living in the south of France. After a spell at a Surrey boarding school she moved to Paris and studied at the sorbonne. When war broke out, she joined the red cross but in 1941 she returned to England and joined the Women's Auxiliary Air force. Her bilangual skills meant she was soon recruited by the SOE* and in 1943 she was sent to France, working as a courier in the Jura region. She lived on a french family in the village of Clairvaux-les-Lacs .

Six months after her arrival, she was betrayed. Diana Rowden was caught and taken for interrogation by the SS in Paris. On July 5 1944 she was transferred along with three other female agents (Andree BORREL, Vera LEIGH and Sonya OLSCHANEZKY to Natzweiler-Struthof concentration camp in Alsace. That night the women were given lethal injections after what she was put on a furnace.



*SOE, The Special Operations Executive (SOE) was a British World War II organisation. It was officially formed in July 1940 under Minister of Economic Warfare Hugh Dalton, from the amalgamation of three existing secret organisations. Its purpose was to conduct espionage, sabotage and reconnaissance in occupied Europe (and later, also in occupied Southeast Asia) against the Axis powers, and to aid local resistance movements.

A emotional reunion

In april 2017, a biography about de life of Diana written by Gabrielle ROTHWELL was published. In this instance, the Diana's Britain family and her French family where she hide before she was arrested, their was found themselves for the first time since the World War II. At this event, their decided to organise a tribute at the Natzweiler-Struthof where Diana perish.

Order of the ceremony

9h30 : Guests reception.

10h00 : Guided tour in French and in English.

11h30 : Ceremony with song, floral offering, the last post and a speeches in French and in English.

12h15 : A formal handover of Diana's objects to the Europeen center on resistance and deportation.

12h30 : A friendship toast.



About the european center on resistance and deportation (CERD)

In the heart of the Vosges, at 800 m altitude, are preserved the remains of the only Nazi concentration camp in France, the KL-Natzweiler-Struthof. In the precincts of the former camp, the visitor can discover four barracks including the prison and the crematorium, as well as a historical museum. Located 1.5 km below, the gas chamber can also be visited. Adjoining the camp, the european center on resistance and deportation houses a permanent exhibition on Nazism and Resistance and a temporary exhibition. Place of memory and contemplation, the site transmit the memory of the 52,000 deportees of all the European nations who were interned in this camp or in a annexed camps, where nearly 22,000 were killed.

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